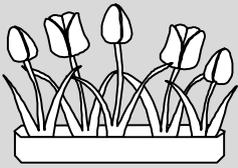




Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association Summer Newsletter

www.edmontonrta.org

June 2009



Inside This Issue

- 1 Summer Luncheon
- 2 President's Message
- 2 Summary of Executive Meeting
- 2 Important Dates
- 2 Membership Report
- 3 ERTA Annual General Meeting Minutes
- 4 Join ERTA Executive
- 4 Teachers' Time Out
- 4 Mayfield Dinner Theatre
- 4 NanoFab Field Trip
- 5 Waste Management Centre Tour
- 5 Benefits Potpourri
- 6 Pension Update
- 7 Volunteer Opportunities
- 7 Thought For The Day
- 7 Cost of Living Adjustment
- 8 ERTA Membership Application Form

SUMMER LUNCHEON

and

Annual General Meeting

Chateau Louis

11727 Kingsway Avenue

Date: June 10

Lunch: 11:45 a.m.

Menu: Roast chicken buffet

Cost: \$20 per person (includes GST and gratuity)

Speaker: Maurine Maslen, ERTA Membership Co-ordinator

Topic: "Experiences in Burundi"

Door Prize: Everyone is eligible for a door prize.

PLEASE NOTE:

The phoning committee will be contacting you prior to June 3rd so we can have an accurate count for our caterer.

Please note that ERTA has to pay for lunches that have been booked even if the individuals do not attend.

Donations to the Food Bank are appreciated.

THE EXECUTIVE

President:
Vi Oka, (780) 459-8013

1st Vice-President:
Joan Harrison, (780) 467-3885
2nd Vice-President:
Joyce Liska, (780) 487-3029

Treasurer:
Bernie Lemay, (780) 469-5031
Membership:
Maurine Maslen, (780) 418-8032

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At this time last year a barrel of Texas light crude was US\$147.00; after reaching a low of US\$43.00, today it is back up to US\$62.00. How quickly the global markets can change!

The fear of a deepening recession and the cost price index sinking into deflation may be suppressed by the increase in energy prices. Since momentum in the stock market tends to be a forerunner of economic trends, the run on the market during the past few weeks may mean that the recession will be a "V"-shaped one – a sharp decrease followed by a quick recovery. The value of the Canadian dollar continues to rise. As long as the political climate worldwide is relatively quiet we may even see a return to parity with the American dollar. Nevertheless the impending bankruptcy of General Motors and restructuring plans dictated by bondholders in order to secure billions in government loans may have a dramatic effect on the financial markets. Hopefully the intrusion of stimulus packages worldwide has had the intended effect and the economy is into a recovery mode.

A number of issues discussed during the current sitting of the legislature are significant for all teachers. Bill 25 will impact teacher pensions, while Bill 44 will have major implications for our colleagues in the classroom.

Now that spring has finally arrived, perhaps renewed hope that comes with each new growth cycle will lift our spirits and carry us into a carefree and uneventful summer.

I would like to thank the members of the Executive as well as the ERTA membership for their support this past year. I wish you joy in your pursuit of leisure activities, inspiration as you embark on special projects, satisfaction in your contribution to worthy causes, appreciation in your relationships with family and friends and peace of mind as you contemplate future endeavours.

SUMMARY OF EXECUTIVE MEETING

The following topics were discussed and decisions made at a meeting of the ERTA Executive on May 13, 2009:

- Vi Oko outlined the implications of Bill 25.
- Bernie Lemay stated that Association assets to April 29, 2009 totalled \$14,971.16, expenses amounted to \$11,579.42, leaving a bank balance of \$3,391.74.
- Roast chicken will be the hot entrée at the luncheon. The per-plate charge will be \$20.00.
- Maurine Maslen will do a PowerPoint presentation highlighting her recent experiences in Burundi.
- Plans for future outings to the Mayfield Dinner Theatre, the Edmonton Waste Management Centre and the Micromachining and Nano Fabrication facility were considered.
- The ERTA brochure will be revised and made available to new retirees.

IMPORTANT DATES

Teachers' Time Out	June 5, 2009
Summer Luncheon & AGM	June 10, 2009
Waste Mgmt. Centre Tour	June 18, 2009
NanoFab Field Trip	June 24, 2009
ERTA Executive Meeting	August 26, 2009
Fall Luncheon	September 23, 2009
Mayfield Dinner Theatre	November 18, 2009

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Many memberships are up for renewal at the end of August. For those of you whose membership will be due at that time, a letter has been enclosed with your mailed copy of the newsletter, or has been e-mailed to you. If you wish to renew your membership at the June luncheon, it would be helpful if you would fill out the membership information form before coming to the event. You can also mail your membership to me if you do not wish to wait in line for your receipt and membership card.

The Membership Co-ordinator position is vital to the smooth operation of ERTA. When I went to Africa for three months, the Association became very aware that it is very important that someone else be familiar with the procedures that are in place for keeping the

database up-to-date, for doing the mail-out of the newsletter, and for preparing the telephone lists for the social events. Therefore, if anyone is interested in getting involved with membership, please contact me.

It is with sadness that I report the demise of Patrick Quinlan on August 23, 2008, a well-respected senior administrator who served as President of the Edmonton Catholic Teachers Local No. 54. He worked tirelessly to convince retired Catholic teachers to join ERTA and was awarded a lifetime membership for his service to the Association.

I am also sorry to note the passing of Margaret Shupe on February 17, 2009. Margaret got her start in education at Normal School, then taught all over Alberta and, after her retirement, in Japan. She continued to educate herself, earning a bachelor's and a master's degree and through her interests and courses, continued to educate herself and others.

Once again, it is the time for retirement from teaching. If you know of anyone who has recently retired or is retiring in June, please tell them about ERTA and let them know that new retirees receive a complimentary membership their first year of retirement, but only if they contact me.

Maurine Maslen

ERTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

The AGM was held on June 11, 2008 at the Chateau Louis Hotel & Conference Centre.

1. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by President Joy de Mello at 1:05 p.m.
 2. Approval of the Agenda: Moved by Marie Pylypa, seconded by Margaret Legrow, *that the agenda be approved as published*. CARRIED.
 3. Minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting: Moved by Diane Tyrkalo, seconded by Joyce Liska, *that the minutes of the 2007 AGM be accepted as printed in the June 2008 newsletter*. CARRIED.
 4. Business Arising: There was no business arising from the minutes of the 2007 AGM.
5. Reports
 - (a) President's Report – Joy outlined the successful events and activities that took place during this past year and expressed appreciation for the support she has received.
 - (b) Treasurer's Report – Moved by Bernie Lemay, seconded by Dave Burghardt, *that the auditor's financial report for the period ending April 30, 2008 be accepted as presented*. CARRIED.
 - (c) Membership Report – Maurine Maslen thanked the membership for its support and co-operation, noting that many members are renewing by mail and the renewals are often for a five-year period, which makes her task much easier.
 - (d) Benefits Representative Report – Ed Friss noted that the ARTA Health and Wellness Benefits Program (new title) has expanded its prospective membership base by adding the retired support staff of public and separate school systems across the province; support staff from universities, colleges, and technical institutions in Alberta as well as the ATA and ATRF; along with Public Service retirees from the provincial government as affiliates. Renewal rates will increase by about 5% and the Best Doctors program was approved as a stand-alone option. Please contact Ed or Fred Laux if you have any questions about ARTA's benefit plan.
 6. Election of Officers: In the absence of the ERTA Past President, Esther Oaks, Irl Miller determined that there were no additional nominations to the slate of officers presented to the membership. The new executive consists of the following ERTA members: President – Vi Oko, 1st Vice-President – Joan Harrison, 2nd Vice-President – TBA, Past President – Joy de Mello, Treasurer – Bernie Lemay, Membership – Maurine Maslen, Secretaries (2) – Shelley Bouska and Carol Loewen, Benefits Reps. (2) – Ed Friss and Fred Laux, Members at Large – Adrienne Coull, Joyce Liska, Joyce Lukasiewicz, Tom

Perkins, Shirley Richardson, Diane Tyrkalo, and Gilles Verret.

7. Appreciation of Retiring Executive Members: Joy de Mello thanked Esther Hardy, Esther Oaks, Mary Oswald and Lily Siminiuk, all of whom will not be returning to the executive, for their work and dedication.
8. Hand Over of Gavel: Joy handed over the gavel to the new president, Vi Oko.
9. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

JOIN THE ERTA EXECUTIVE

The Annual General Meeting is the time for electing our executive for the upcoming year. If you or anyone you know would like to become a member at large please call Joy de Mello at (780) 455-9003. We would love to have you join us.

TEACHERS' TIME OUT

The Edmonton Public Teachers Local No. 37 has graciously invited the ERTA membership to the final Teachers' Time Out this school term in the cafeteria at Barnett House located at 11010 – 142 Street on Friday, June 5, 2009 from 4:15 to 6:00 p.m. A light lunch along with complimentary coffee, tea, juice and soft drinks will be available. Alcoholic beverages can be purchased at a nominal cost.

Construction apparatus has overtaken the front lawn and flower beds; however, the parkade is open and a safe passageway allows for access to the building through the front doors. Parking is also available behind Barnett House with entry through the patio doors.

Plan to attend and bring a friend.

MAYFIELD DINNER THEATRE

Several ERTA members who attended the theatrical production of *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* enjoyed the camaraderie and the play so much that they suggested that the Executive offer the membership another opportunity to attend a performance at the Mayfield Dinner Theatre. Tickets have been pre-booked in the Broadway section for the

brunch performance of *The Super Groovy 70s* on Wednesday, November 18, 2009.

The original "me" generation is reborn at the Mayfield this year with some of the best music and "far out" fashion of the modern age. The great rock bands emerged in this decade along with platform shoes, bell-bottoms, big hair and something called disco. Shake your booty and remember . . . the world will be a better place when everyone is groovy!

The doors open at 10:00 a.m. and the presentation begins at 12:00 noon. Dress is business casual. Please add your name to the Mayfield sign-up sheet and give Vi Oko your cheque for \$75.00, which includes GST, made payable to the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association. If you are unable to attend the luncheon, mail your cheque to Vi at:

20 Glenhaven Crescent,
St. Albert, AB T8N 1A5.

Seating is limited on that date; therefore, tickets are available on a first come, first served basis.

NANOFAB FIELD TRIP

A field trip to the Micromachining and Nanofabrication Research Facility has been scheduled for Wednesday, June 24, 2009, beginning at 10 a.m. to learn about what nanotechnology is and how the myriad of miniscule articles are made. The presentation and tour, courtesy of the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, will take approximately ninety minutes.

Absolutely no parking is available along 116 Street or in the neighbouring residential community. The nearest parking facility is the Windsor Car Park located immediately north of 92 Avenue on 116 Street. The Faculty Club parking lot is located directly north of the Windsor Car Park facility. At the Windsor parkade parking costs \$11.40 for the day, \$1.65 for each half hour. You are expected to deposit the \$11.40 when you enter; however, the unused balance is returned to you when you exit. The parking rate is exactly the same at the Faculty Club parking lot but no refunds are issued. Do consider carpooling with a colleague or a friend or taking the LRT instead.

The Electrical and Computer Engineering Research Facility (ECERF), a building with a red sandstone base and cream-coloured brick upper storeys in the front (west side) and red brick upper storeys at the back (east side) is located on the west side of 116 Street opposite 92 Avenue. The NanoFab is housed at the back of this building. We will meet in the foyer of the Maier Learning Centre on the east side of the building. Following the ETLC signs, take the walkway leading east from the 116 Street sidewalk, walk past the Chemicals and Materials Engineering signpost up to the Faculty of Engineering sign. Turn right and enter the building through the doors at the base of the sandstone column.

To register for the field trip, please write your name on the sign-up sheet on the registration table at the luncheon. If you are unable to join us on June 10, telephone Joan Harrison at (780) 467-3885 or Vi Oko at (780) 459-8013.

WASTE MANAGEMENT CENTRE TOUR

A two-hour tour of the compost plant and recycling facility at the Edmonton Waste Management Centre located at 13111 Meridian Street NE has been arranged for Thursday, June 18, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. Meridian Street can be accessed from the west by taking Exit 400B off the Yellowhead Trail or Exit 400A if the Yellowhead westbound is approached from the south via 216 Street.

We will meet in front of the Administration Building, which is the first building we will see upon our arrival at the Waste Management site.

Because the bus can only accommodate seventeen visitors the tour will be limited to the first seventeen individuals who register by writing their names on the sign-up sheet at the luncheon or telephoning Joan Harrison at (780) 467-3885 or Vi Oko at (780) 459-8013.

The tour host is a retired teacher. Join us on June 18 to discover how our waste is turned into environmentally useful products using eco-friendly techniques.

BENEFITS POTPOURRI

A number of items are brought to your attention for your information, interest,

consideration, and possible action. Should you wish further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact the article contributor, Ed Friss at (780) 476-5924, BBR (Branch Benefits Representative).

The ARTA Health and Wellness Benefits Plan was reviewed at a meeting held on May 12 and 13, 2009. Proposed changes to the Plan require ratification by the ARTA Board of Directors at a meeting scheduled for the end of May. Pending Board approval, a summary for the policy year, September 1, 2009 to August 31, 2010, will be communicated to all policyholders in July. Should the printed Benefits Plan Summary with the incorporated changes be available prior to the June luncheon and Annual General Meeting, the BBRs will make an effort to report the updates at that time. Please be reminded that, in its usual fine fashion, all of the changes will be included in the Fall 2009 edition of the ARTA *News and Views*.

Modifications made to the Benefits Plan for the next policy year do not reflect the replacement of the current prescription drug program for seniors with the new Pharmaceutical Strategy that Health and Wellness Minister Ron Liepert released on April 23, 2009. Implications of the Pharmaceutical Strategy on the Benefits Plan will be addressed after Ron Liepert's proposal receives the endorsement of the Legislative Assembly.

The election of various executive positions as well as BBRs will occur in conjunction with the ERTA Annual General Meeting. The only credentials required of anyone to serve in this position are the desire to provide information to interested colleagues about the ARTA Health and Wellness Benefits Plan and a commitment to participate, once a year, in a BBR workshop where information and training are provided to become a more effective representative. Please give the idea some thought and telephone Joy de Mello at (780) 455-9003 if you are interested in serving the Association in this capacity.

PENSION UPDATE

On November 15, 2007, the Government of Alberta reached a tentative Memorandum of Agreement with the Alberta Teachers' Association regarding the disposition of the pre-1992 unfunded liability (UFL) of the Teachers' Pension Plan. This agreement, ratified by Alberta teachers by January 31, 2008, replaced the 1992 UFL agreement and committed the government to make all of the contributions required to fund the pre-1992 UFL from January 1, 2008 to August 31, 2009. Effective September 2009, the fund will be split into the pre-September 1992 and the post-August 1992 portions in accordance with legislation included in Bill 25, the Teachers' Pension Plans Amendment Act 2009.

At that time, pre-September 1992 service earned by teachers will be funded solely by the government. That means pensionable service benefits will be guaranteed by the Government of Alberta and any borrowing from the post-August 1992 fund will end. Pensions will continue to be administered by the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) and retirees will not notice any difference in their pensions.

Since the government will disburse funds only when pension payments are due, it will not pay more money into the Teachers' Pension Plan than it would have under the 1992 agreement. Under the previous agreement, the government and teachers would have paid into the pre-1992 UFL until 2060 and, over that time, would have put in more money than it will now cost the government to pay the pre-1992 pensions.

The post-August 1992 portion will be fully funded by contributions from the government and active teachers, and will be administered by the ATRF. Contributions to the Plan will be determined by the assets required to fund teachers' pensions as they are earned. Contribution rates are presently set every two years through a valuation of the Plan's assets and liabilities. Rate adjustments are made, as required, to ensure that all pension payments will be maintained. Rates may change due to a number of factors including salary increases,

cost of living adjustment increases, or decreased rates of return.

As of August 31, 2008, the \$5.107 billion in assets in the post-August 1992 benefit fund included the accumulated \$944 million loan to the Government of Alberta, made to ensure the payment of pensions that were related to pre-September 1992 service. The Memorandum of Agreement provides that this loan may be paid back, but not before January 2010.

The ATRF is currently conducting a comprehensive asset/liability study to revise the optimum long-term investment asset mix. The amount of investment income a pension plan can generate reduces the contributions required. Higher risk investments produce higher investment returns. Pension plans, however, need to balance the requirement to produce investment income with the obligation to minimize risk. A revamped funding objective, risk structure and policy assessment will be established that will result in a reduced long-term rate of return on investments.

Following a strong 11.7% rate of return in the previous year, the ATRF posted a -2.8% return in the past fiscal year ending August 31, 2008 due to the collapse of the sub-prime and toxic asset-backed investment markets. Any funding losses that occur due to the decrease in the value of global investment markets will result in a deficiency in the projected rate of return. While the fund has suffered some short-term losses from time to time, the Plan has averaged earnings of 8.0% each year over the previous sixteen years, exceeding its objective of 7.0% by 1.0% each year.

In accordance with federal legislation in existence since 1992, any deficiency that occurs will be amortized over fifteen years through increased contributions to the fund. Although the prevailing global investment market situation has affected all investors, the pension fund has been prudently invested and well positioned to weather the decline in market value. In effect, the pension fund is secure and the Plan continues to meet its long-term investment objectives to ensure that benefits are funded in accordance with

established funding criteria. As of August 31, 2009, the ATRF will perform an actuarial valuation, followed by the implementation of the revised long-term investment rate of return policy. As a result of a lower expected rate of return, active teachers will be assessed a contribution rate increase to fund ongoing benefits that will go into effect on September 1, 2010.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton and Area wish to establish a partnership with members of the Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association to mentor students in high-needs schools. The following school-based mentoring options would involve a commitment during daytime hours from October to May:

- As an individual in-school mentor, to work one-on-one with an elementary student on literacy-based activities for one hour at the same time each week; or
- As a member of a mentor group, to visit a school once a week, rotating through a schedule of activities determined jointly; or
- As an individual or as a member of a group under the supervision of the Inner City Children's Project staff, to provide a group program once a week at two elementary schools in downtown Edmonton on days when the students are dismissed early; or
- As a member of a small group of senior mentors, to assume responsibility for supervising a team of high school teen mentors for two hours once a month during their weekly visits to various high-needs elementary schools in Edmonton.

Retired teachers are also encouraged to become a Big Brother or Big Sister participating every week or two, either in the evening or on the weekend, in activities that both the volunteer and the child enjoy.

Each volunteer would be asked to complete an enrollment form, a security clearance and an intervention record check, as well as provide three references, attend a private, confidential interview and participate in a group training session.

For further information, interested individuals are encouraged to contact Jodie Richardson at (780) 424-8181 ext. 227 or e-mail her at j.richardson@bbbsedmonton.org.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"There is a wonderful mythical law of nature that the three things we crave most in life – happiness, freedom, and peace of mind – are always attained by giving them to someone else."

Peyton Conway

COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENT

Each of you received a letter from the Alberta Teachers' Retirement Fund (ATRF) in January informing you of the increase in your monthly pension cheque based on the current COLA arrangement – 60% of pre-1993 years of service plus 70% of your post-1992 years of service equals your total percentage increase. Teachers fund the entire cost of the additional 10%.

The increase is based on the Alberta Consumer Price Index (ACPI), which measures the comparison of a price change of a defined basket of goods and services purchased by consumers in Alberta over the most recent twelve-month period ending October 31. The Alberta index is based on eight major components – shelter; transportation; food; recreation, education and reading; household operations and furnishings; clothing and footwear; health and personal care; as well as alcoholic beverages and tobacco products – each with a specific weighting. Eight volatile components (as defined by the Bank of Canada) – fruit, fruit preparations and nuts; vegetables and vegetable preparations; mortgage interest cost; natural gas; fuel oil and other fuel; gasoline; inter-city transportation; and smokers' supplies – are excluded when an increase in the consumer price index is determined.

Based on the 23.6% increase of the ACPI, effective January 1, 2009, pensions increased by 2.16% for service earned prior to 1993 and by 2.52% for service earned after 1992.

YEAR	ACPI	60%	70%
1999	1.10%	0.66%	0.77%
2000	2.20%	1.32%	1.54%
2001	3.30%	1.98%	2.31%
2002	3.30%	1.98%	2.31%
2003	1.70%	1.02%	1.19%
2004	5.70%	3.42%	3.99%
2005	1.30%	6.78%	0.91%
2006	2.00%	1.20%	1.40%
2007	3.60%	2.16%	2.52%
2008	4.90%	2.94%	3.43%
2009	3.60%	2.16%	2.52%

The teachers' pension plans in several provinces of Canada have a 100% COLA provision; meanwhile, others either cap the inflationary increase or make it dependent on available funding. Alberta teachers live, on average, longer than people in other professions (ATRF, 2008). The average teacher retires with twenty-six years of service and lives twenty-seven additional years, meaning they receive a pension for longer than they contribute. This demographic makes a 100% COLA an important pension provision. Consequently, ARTA is advocating that the COLA payments be adjusted to 100%, much like the Canada Pension Plan, and that the index used be more in line with the real cost of living increases so that the retired teachers of this province can keep up with the rising cost of goods and services in today's society.

In the ensuing eleven years since I retired in 1998, the ACPI has increased by 32.7%; however, my pension has only risen by 20.274%, which means my purchasing capacity has already diminished by 12.426%.

ERTA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(First year of membership for a new retiree is complimentary)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Please check here if you would like to receive your newsletter by e-mail.

Send \$15.00 by cheque to: Maurine Maslen, Membership
Edmonton Retired Teachers' Association
53 Goodridge Drive
St. Albert, AB
T8N 2B1